

## Galatians Chapter 1 Continued

**Galatians 1:9 "As we said before, so say I now again, If any [man] preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."**

“As we said before”:

This refers to what Paul taught during an earlier visit to these churches, not a previous comment in this epistle.

“Any man”:

Paul turns from the hypothetical case of (verse 8, the apostle or heavenly angels preaching a false gospel), to the real situation faced by the Galatians.

The Judaizers were doing just that, and were to be devoted to destruction because of their damning heresy.

This is so important that Paul has mentioned it the second time.

This should be a lesson to all of us, about how important it is to not look for another doctrine after we have been saved.

If the message we receive is good enough to save us, it is also good enough to keep us.

In our time frame, there are many false doctrines being proclaimed as the truth.

We must examine the things that we hear and make sure they line up with the Word of God.

False doctrine is usually close to the truth.

There will be just minor variations here and there.

It will sound very near the truth.

We are told to try the spirits and see whether they are of God or not.

1 John 4:1 "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Look with me, at how you can tell if they be of God or not.

1 John 4:2-3 "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:" "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in

the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."

#### Verses 10-12

Because the false teachers sought to undermine Paul's spiritual credentials, he set out to defend his apostleship, explaining once again (verse 1), that he was appointed by God and not by men.

**Galatians 1:10 "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."**

"I yet pleased men":

Paul's previous motivation when he used to persecute Christians on behalf of his fellow Jews.

"The servant of Christ":

See the note on Rom. 1.

Paul had become a willing slave of Christ, which had cost him a great deal of suffering from others (see 6:17).

Such personal sacrifice is exactly opposite the goal of pleasing men (6:12).

"For":

Explains the harsh language of (verses 3-9): If Paul were to "persuade men" (i.e., court their favor), or "seek to please" them by preaching a false gospel they want to hear, he "should not be the servant of Christ."

1 Thessalonians 2:4 "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

You can see that Paul is fully aware of his obligation only to speak exactly what God has given him to say.

Choose now whom you will serve, God or man.

We must make the same decision that Paul faced.

Paul had been a Pharisee; he knew exactly what they taught.

He also knew that the teaching of Judaism was another doctrine.

Grace and law were not the same.

The natural thing for Paul to do would have been to side in with these Jews, of whom he had been one, but he found out better when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Paul knew better than anyone else the bondage that the law brought.

He also, had experienced first-hand the freedom of grace through Jesus Christ.

Man is a free agent.

We may choose God, or man.

It is our choice.

The way of the law is very similar to what we see in many countries today.

The law burdens people down with a heavy load to bear.

Grace lifts that load.

#### Verses 11-12

In (verses 6-9), Paul implied that his gospel was the only true one; the message he preaches is the yardstick by which all others are to be measured.

The reason for this is that his gospel is human neither in nature (“not after man,” verse 11), nor in origin (“I neither received it of man, verse 12).

The apostle’s gospel is genuine; because he received it directly from the risen Lord (“was I taught it ... by the revelation of Jesus Christ”).

**Galatians 1:11 "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man."**

“But I certify you”:

The strong Greek verb Paul used here often introduced an important and emphatic statement (1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 8:1).

“The gospel ... not after man”:

The gospel Paul preached was not human in origin or it would have been like all other human religion, permeated with works righteousness born of man's pride and Satan's deception (see Romans 1:16).

Paul had been taught the law in the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, but God the Holy Spirit had taught Paul the lesson in grace.

His teaching of man had made him a Pharisee, not a Christian.

The gospel that Paul had brought these Galatians was not what he had learned as a Pharisee, but was a direct revelation of Christ to Paul through the Holy Spirit.

Paul's learning of the gospel of Christ, then, was not of man, or by man, but of God.

Jesus Christ is the Truth.

This is what Paul taught.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**Galatians 1:12 "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught [it], but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."**

"Neither received it of man, neither was I taught it":

In contrast to the Judaizers, who received their religious instruction from rabbinic tradition.

Most Jews did not study the actual Scriptures; instead they used human interpretations of Scripture as their religious authority and guide.

Many of their traditions were not taught in Scripture but also contradicted it (see Mark 7:13).

"By the revelation of Jesus Christ":

This refers to the unveiling of something previously kept secret, in this case, Jesus Christ.

While he knew about Christ, Paul subsequently met Him personally on the road to Damascus and received the truth of the gospel from Him (Acts 9:1-16).

Paul was 3 years in the desert, and the Holy Spirit of God taught him during that time.

Paul's first encounter with the Lord on the road to Damascus was a revealing in itself.

When the Light of Jesus shines upon you, you are never the same as you were before.

Immediately, Paul was transformed from a doubter to a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before, he believed that a trouble maker called Jesus existed.

Now his eyes have been opened, and he realizes that this Jesus, whom he persecuted, was in fact, God manifest in the flesh.

He even immediately called Him Lord.

His eyes of understanding were opened at this time, and he was prepared to receive the real truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul had been taught of man, but it was the Jewish traditions that he had been taught, not the gospel of Christ.

The Truth was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.

Verses 13-24

“For”:

Begins to confirm his assertion of receiving the gospel straight from God and not from men (see verse 12).

Neither before (verses 13-14), nor after (verses 15-22), conversion did Paul obtain a knowledge of salvation from any human source.

Prior to conversion he was an enemy of the gospel, interested not in learning it but only in destroying it.

During the 14 years following his conversion he was not with the apostles long enough to have been adequately instructed by them in the gospel.

The point is that he received the message of salvation from Christ, not from man (verse 12).

Verses 1:13 to 2:21: Paul offers a brief biographical sketch of important events in his life to further defend his apostleship and prove the authenticity of the gospel of grace he proclaimed.

**Galatians 1:13 "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:"**

“Jews’ religion”:

The Jewish religious system of works righteousness, based not primarily on the Old Testament text, but on rabbinic interpretations and traditions.

In fact, Paul will argue that a proper understanding of the Old Testament can lead only to Christ and His gospel of grace through faith (3:6-29).

“Persecuted”:

The tense of this Greek verb emphasizes Paul’s persistent and continual effort to hurt and ultimately exterminate Christians (see notes on Acts 8:1-3; 9:1; 1 Tim. 1:12-14).

“My conversation in time past”:

Means my former conduct.

Paul is speaking of the law that had been given to the Jews.

Paul was educated by Gamaliel in this law, that they called the Law of Moses.

Paul believed that he was doing God's will, when he persecuted the Christians.

He was very anxious to be rid of these Christians and their gospel.

Paul was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as we said before.

Paul was on a journey to persecute Christians, when he first met Jesus.

It is easier for Paul to witness to someone that is in the same position he had been in.

**Galatians 1:14 "And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers."**

“Profited ... above”:

The Greek word means “to chop ahead,” much like one would blaze a trail through a forest.

Paul blazed his path in Judaism (Phil. 3:5-6), and because he saw Jewish Christians as obstacles to its advancement, he worked to cut them down.

“Exceedingly zealous”:

Paul demonstrated this by the extent to which he pursued and persecuted Christians (see Acts 8:1-3; 26:11).

“Traditions of my fathers”:

The oral teaching about Old Testament law commonly known as the “Halakah.”

This collection of interpretations of the law eventually carried the same authority as, or even greater than the law (Torah), itself.

Its regulations were so hopelessly complex and burdensome that even the most astute rabbinical scholars could not master it by either interpretation or conduct.

This verse could be translated, "I was progressing in Judaism ahead of many contemporaries in my nation, because I was far more zealous for my ancestral traditions."

Let's look at a few of the Scriptures pertaining to the very thing Paul is saying here.

Acts 22:3 "I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

Acts 26:5 "Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

Acts 26:9 "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

We see from this and the next 2 verses, that Paul had been a Jew, just like them.

In fact, he had been a very strict Jew, a Pharisee.

Philippians 3:5-6 "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [of] the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;" "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

Verses 15-16

Since Paul's conversion to Christianity was due to God and not man, and since he did not consult with men subsequent to his conversion, then the apostle could not possibly have received the gospel from any but the Lord.

"To reveal his Son in" [to] "me:" the divine disclosure to man of the person and work of Christ is the essence of the gospel.

**Galatians 1:15 "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called [me] by his grace,"**

"Separated me from my mother's womb":

Paul is not talking about being born, separated physically from his mother, but being separated or set apart to God for service from the time of his birth.

The phrase refers to God's election of Paul without regard for his personal merit or effort. (Isa. 49:1; Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:13-17; Rom. 9:10-23).

“Called me by his grace”:

This refers to God's effectual call (see note on Rom. 1:7).

On the Damascus Road God actually brought Saul; whom He had already chosen, to salvation.

God's foreknowledge was that Paul would be an apostle.

God called Paul even in his mother's womb.

We are all saved by grace, but Paul's calling was of grace.

God knew the heart of Paul.

He knew that Paul wanted to do the will of God.

Paul just did not know the will of God for his life, until he was blinded by the Light of Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Paul's call was of God, and not man.

Paul owed no explanation to the others.

It pleased God to make Paul an apostle.

**Galatians 1:16 "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:"**

“Reveal his Son in me”:

Not only was Christ revealed to Paul on the Damascus Road, but in him as God gave him the life, light, and faith to believe in Him.

“Preach him among the heathen”:

Paul's specific call to proclaim the gospel to non-Jews (see notes on Acts 9:15; 26:12-18; Rom. 1:13-16; 11:13; 15:18).

“Conferred not with flesh and blood”:



Paul did not look to Ananias or other Christians at Damascus for clarification of or addition to the revelation he received from Christ (Acts 9:19-20).

Paul did not run and get advice from his friends to make sure God had called him.

This is good advice for us, as well.

We must not question our call.

We must do exactly what God has called us to do without conferring with our friends first.

God called you, not your friends.

It would be nice if they approved of your call, but that is highly unlikely.

Notice what happened to Paul.

Jesus was revealed inside of Paul when the Light of God shined inside his understanding.

This Light of Jesus does away with all darkness and deception.

Notice this was for a purpose.

Paul was to bring the message God had revealed to him, so that he would bring it to the Gentiles.

God does not idly call us to a job.

Each job God gives is for a purpose.

We do not question God by getting confirmations from people.

**Galatians 1:17 "Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."**

"Jerusalem ... Arabia ... Damascus":

Rather than immediately traveling to Jerusalem to be instructed by the apostles, Paul instead went to Nabatean Arabia, which was a wilderness desert that stretched east of Damascus down to the Sinai Peninsula.

After being prepared for ministry by the Lord, he returned to minister in nearby Damascus.

Following his Damascus road conversion Paul made no trip to Jerusalem, where the apostles were, but spent approximately three years in Arabia.

It is implied that he conferred with God there.

During these three years, he was not taught by men.

Not even the other apostles were to teach Paul.

He was to be taught of the Spirit of God.

Paul was in the desert of Arabia 3 years in training by the Holy Spirit.

We will see this in the next verse.

**Galatians 1:18 "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days."**

“Three years”:

The approximate time from Paul’s conversion to his first journey to Jerusalem.

During those years, he made a visit to Damascus and resided in Arabia, under the instruction of the Lord.

This visit is discussed (in Acts 9:26-30; see note on Acts 9:23).

“Up to Jerusalem”:

Travelers in Israel always speak of going up to Jerusalem because of its higher elevation (see note on Acts 18:22).

“Peter”:

See notes on Matthew 10:2.

The apostle Peter, who was the personal companion of the Lord and the most powerful spokesman in the early years of the Jerusalem church (read Acts chapters 1 – 12).

When Paul did first go to Jerusalem as a Christian, the purpose of his visit was “to see Peter.”

The verb “to see” means “to get to know.”

Paul’s purpose, then, was to become acquainted with Peter, not to be instructed by him.

Peter was the head of the Christian movement at this time.

Paul was showing that not even Peter taught him what to say.

It was the Holy Spirit.

When Paul was ready to minister the gospel, it was understandable that he would go tell Peter.

Jesus had given the keys to Peter, as we read in the following verses.

Matthew 16:18-19 "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

We can easily see why Paul would have gone to inform Peter of his intentions to minister.

**Galatians 1:19 "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."**

“James the Lord’s brother”:

See 2:9, 12; see note on Acts 15:13.

James was Mary's son, and would be the half-brother of Jesus.

James was the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

We remember that James and Jesus' other brothers and sisters did not believe Jesus to be the Christ, until He arose from the dead.

Paul is going into detail about who he had been with, so that all would know that he was not taught of the other disciples.

**Galatians 1:20 "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not."**

The directness of this statement indicates that Paul had been accused by the Jewish legalists of being a liar, who was shameless or deluded.

We see an almost identical Scripture in Romans;

Romans 9:1 "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,"

Verses 21-23

From (2:1), Paul apparently spent about 14 years in “the regions of Syria and Cilicia” (verse 21).

During this period, he preached “the faith which once he destroyed” (verse 23).

Because of his absence from Jerusalem, he “was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea” (verse 22).

Throughout this lengthy evangelistic activity in the north, Paul was too far removed from the apostles in Jerusalem to have received any instruction from them.

Had he been a student of theirs at this time, he would have doubtlessly worked in, and been personally known by, the Judean churches.

**Galatians 1:21 "Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;"**

“Syria and Cilicia”:

See note on Acts 15:23; Acts 9:30.

This area included his home town of Tarsus.

He was preaching in that region for several years.

When word of revival in that area reached Jerusalem, they sent Barnabas (see Acts 11:20-26).

Paul stayed on in that region as a pastor in the church at Antioch.

With Barnabas, they went from there on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3), and afterward returned to Antioch (Acts 14:26), from where they were sent to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 14:26 - 15:4).

Most of Paul's ministry was done as a missionary.

He did minister in Jerusalem, but his primary ministry was in the out-lying area.

Paul established many churches on these journeys.

**Galatians 1:22 "And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ:"**

“Judea”:

See note on Acts 1:8.

Paul did not go to churches that had already been established by someone else.

Paul was an evangelist.

His ministry was in starting new churches in areas where there was no Christian activity.

He was one of the very first missionaries.

Jesus had started many churches in Judea, Himself.

They were well cared for.

They were not Paul's calling.

**Galatians 1:23 "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."**

“Over the 14 years before the Jerusalem Council (see note on 2:1), Paul had come only twice to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30; 11:30), so the Christians there only knew him by reputation.

The word had gotten to these churches in Judea that Paul, who had persecuted them in the past, had been saved and was preaching the gospel to the lost.

Some had a difficult time believing that Paul had changed.

Perhaps, this is one reason that Paul went to places that were not yet committed to Christianity.

**Galatians 1:24 "And they glorified God in me."**

This had been such a drastic change in Paul that they knew it had to be God who did it.

Paul was not glorified by these people, but God.

To even think that God would save someone who had been so terribly opposed to Him, was almost unbelievable.

## **Galatians Chapter 1 Continued Questions**

1. What danger was Paul writing these Galatians about?
2. Why did Paul mention this warning the second time?
3. Why do so many people accept a false doctrine for the truth?
4. How can you tell if a spirit is of God, or not?
5. Do I now persuade \_\_\_\_\_, or \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Galatians chapter 1 verse 10 and what other Scripture are saying the same thing?

7. What is the decision that Paul made that we have to make also?
8. The law burdens people down, but \_\_\_\_\_ lifts that load.
9. Paul's teaching by man had caused him to be a \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Who taught Paul the message of grace?
11. What was the message Paul brought?
12. How long was Paul in the desert being taught?
13. When was the first moment Paul was changed?
14. Paul was changed from a \_\_\_\_\_ to a \_\_\_\_\_.
15. In verse 13, Paul speaks of the law as what?
16. Who had Paul been educated by?
17. Where do we find the Scriptures that tell us exactly what Paul had been?
18. What things did he say that showed beyond a shadow of doubt that he had been a Pharisee?
19. Describe Paul's calling?
20. Who had Paul conferred with to make sure of his calling?
21. Who was Paul called to bring the good news to?
22. Exactly where had Paul first gone after his conversion?
23. Who was the first apostle Paul went to after his 3 year stay in the desert?
24. How long did Paul stay with him?
25. Why had Paul gone to him?
26. What half-brother of Jesus is mentioned as being the second Paul saw?
27. What does Galatians chapter 1 verse 20 and Romans chapter 9 verse 1 have in common?
28. Why did Paul not go to Judea to preach?
29. Verse 24 says, they glorified whom?